

CHAPTER 1—PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 BACKGROUND

A Resource Management Plan (RMP) guides management actions on public lands. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) documents broad-scale land use plan decisions in an RMP for each program area that guides subsequent site-specific implementation. The RMP establishes goals and objectives for resource management, the measures needed to achieve goals and objectives, and parameters for using BLM lands. Lands that are open or available for certain uses, including any applicable restrictions, and lands that are closed to certain uses are also identified. When there are competing resource uses and values in the same area, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), requires that BLM manage the public lands and their various resources so that they are used in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people. Land use plan decisions are made according to the procedures in BLM's planning regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §1600) and in accordance with FLPMA.

The approval of an RMP, which requires preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), constitutes a major federal action and is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). NEPA requires federal agencies to consider environmental consequences in their decision-making process. This EIS is being prepared to explore the impacts from the decisions made in the RMP as well as to fulfill the requirements of NEPA according to the regulations for implementing NEPA in 40 CFR 1500-1508. The EIS informs decision-makers and the public of a range of reasonable alternatives, associated environmental impacts, and any mitigation measures required for selection of an alternative.

This RMP combines the 1983 Price River Management Framework Plan (MFP) and the 1991 San Rafael RMP into one plan called the Price Field Office (PFO) RMP. This new RMP will provide planning guidance for public land and federal mineral estate managed by the PFO in Carbon and Emery counties in central-eastern Utah. The PFO will coordinate the management of public lands within the PFO with other land management agencies, including the State of Utah, the Ute Indian Tribe, the National Park Service (NPS), the Forest Service (USFS), Carbon and Emery counties, municipalities, and private entities. The PFO also will coordinate management with adjoining BLM offices.

“Land use plans of the Secretary under this section shall be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent he finds consistent with Federal law and the purposes of this Act” (FLPMA, Sec 202(c)(9)). This Draft EIS analyzes five distinct alternatives (alternative RMPs) for management of public lands in the PFO. All decisions discussed in this document apply only to public lands administered by BLM.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the PFO RMP revision is to ensure that public lands are managed according to the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. This RMP revision will meet the mandate of FLPMA that public lands be managed according to land use plans and will follow the planning principles outlined in Section 202(c) of FLPMA (43 USC 1712). This will be accomplished through the identification of desired resource conditions, special management needs, allowable public land uses, and actions needed to achieve objectives. Comprehensive in nature, the PFO RMP will address resource management issues

identified through public, agency, and interagency scoping efforts as well as resource management according to BLM policies.

1.2.2 Need

BLM completed detailed evaluations of the Price River MFP and San Rafael RMP in 2001 and determined that both plans were deficient as a result of changing conditions and demands on the area's resources. The demand for resource development has increased, as has concern for the environment. In addition to traditional consumptive uses (i.e., mining and livestock grazing), there is interest in uses that emphasize aesthetic values such as open space and recreational opportunities. Changes in recreation users and types of recreational opportunities have resulted in conflicts and resource concerns that the old plans were not designed to address. These uses need to be addressed in terms of how they affect local communities, regional and state interests, and ecosystem health. In addition, the planning area includes about 6,500 acres of recently acquired lands west of the Green River that were previously part of Naval Oil Shale Reserve #2 (NOSR2) previously managed by the Department of Defense.

The evaluation also noted that many of the Price River MFP and San Rafael RMP land use plan decisions had already been implemented. In some cases, implementation of the previous decisions resulted in the establishment of valid existing rights or other obligations that will be an important consideration in the preparation of the PFO RMP. For example, many of the oil and gas resources in the planning area have been leased. The presence of these valid existing rights will affect the management choices available for BLM to consider in developing the PFO RMP. Alternatives will address potential stipulations to be attached to new leases or leases to be reoffered if existing leases are relinquished, the availability of unleased lands for future oil and gas leasing, and additional mitigation measures to be considered in reviewing Applications for Permits to Drill. In addition, the emergence of new exploration and extraction technologies has changed the type and level of impacts to various resources. The PFO RMP/EIS will allow for these impacts to be addressed.

Other changes have occurred since the last plans were developed that could result in impacts not previously analyzed. The PFO RMP revision will allow for updating management decisions to align with changes in federal law and BLM policies. These changes include passage of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 as well as direction contained in Executive Orders 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites), 13112 (Invasive Species), and 13287 (Preserve America). The PFO RMP revision is also needed to address discrepancies that have occurred because of changes in BLM policy (off-highway vehicle [OHV] route designation policy, consideration of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern [ACEC], Energy Policy and Conservation Act Reauthorization of 2000 [EPCA], change in listed species, etc.). The planning criteria and issues described in Sections 1.5 and 1.6 provide constraints and ground rules that further define the need for this plan revision.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCES AND STUDY AREA

The PFO is located in central-eastern Utah on the western portion of the Colorado Plateau and encompasses Carbon and Emery counties (Map 1-1). The BLM PFO is bounded by the Carbon-Duchesne county line on the north, the Green River on the east, the Emery-Wayne county line on the south, and the Emery and Carbon county lines where they meet Sanpete and Sevier counties to the west. Lands managed by the PFO encompass approximately 2,500,000 acres of surface estate and 2,800,000 acres of federal mineral resources underlying lands managed by BLM, USFS, the State of Utah, and private entities.

People from a number of communities rely on natural resources within the planning area for their livelihoods. Communities in the northern portion of the planning area are located adjacent to US-6.

These include Helper, Price (Carbon County seat), Wellington, and East Carbon/Sunnyside off Highway U-123. Several communities are located to the south adjacent to Highway U-10. These include Huntington, Castle Dale (Emery County seat), Orangeville, Ferron, and Emery. Green River is located on the east side of Emery County along US-6 and I-70.

Elevations in the area range from about 4,000 feet at the city of Green River to more than 10,000 feet at East Mountain. The planning area is drained by the Green River and its tributaries as well as the Price and San Rafael Rivers. A number of popular scenic attractions are located within the area. These include the Book Cliffs, Roan Cliffs, San Rafael Swell, Nine Mile Canyon, Desolation Canyon, Cleveland-Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry, and Price River Canyon.

The Green River flows through the Vernal Field Office and then forms the boundary between the Price and Moab Field Offices. Management responsibility for certain sections of the Green River that are not navigable is shared by these offices [Price and Moab Field Offices]. Management responsibility for certain sections of the Green River that are navigable belongs to the State of Utah through its Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, which owns and manages the bed of the navigable sections of the Green River up to the ordinary high water mark. Furthermore, the State of Utah through its Water Engineer and Divisions of Water Rights and Water Resources, together with individual and institutional owners of water rights both in Carbon and Emery Counties, and downstream on the Green and Colorado River System, own the rights to the water flowing through the Green River. Sections of the Green River in the planning area are navigable bodies of water and were navigable at Utah's statehood. Thus under the Equal Footing Doctrine of the United States Constitution, the State of Utah through its Division of Forestry Fire and State Lands, not the BLM, owns and manages those sections up to the statehood ordinary high water mark. Moreover, Utah through Divisions of Water Rights and Water Resources and its State Water Engineer, along with various water user associations and other individual and institutional holders of water rights in the Green and Colorado River systems, allocate and otherwise manage the rights to the water flowing through the Green River.

Management decisions in the vicinity of non-navigable sections of the Green River will be coordinated with the Vernal and Moab Field Offices, and will be coordinated with management decisions for the navigable sections of the Green River carried out of the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, and will be coordinated with management decisions of the State Water Engineer, the Utah Division of Water Rights, and the Utah Division of Water Resources with respect to water rights for the entire stretch of the Green River in the planning area, to ensure that management objectives for the Vernal, Price and Moab Field Offices for the area are unified, and to ensure that Utah's valid and existing ownership rights in and to the bed of the navigable portions of Green River, and state and local valid and existing rights in and to the water which flows through the entire stretch of Green River in the planning area, are not infringed or compromised.

The planning area also shares boundaries with the Richfield Field Office, Salt Lake Field Office, and Manti-LaSal National Forest as well as the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation. Land ownership is shown in Table 1-1 and Map 1-2.

Table 1-1. Land Ownership in the PFO, by County

Land Owner	Number of Acres Carbon County	Percentage of Total
Federal	448,988	48
BLM	418,661	45
USFS	30,327	3
Tribal Lands	128	0.01
State	124,497	13
Private	365,005	39
Total Carbon County	938,618	100
Emery County		
Federal	2,273,982	80
BLM	2,061,233	72
USFS	210,665	7
National Park Service	2,084	0.1
State	341,155	12
Private	235,502	8
Total Emery County	2,850,639	100
Total Field Office—Carbon and Emery County Combined		
Federal	2,722,970	72
BLM	2,479,894	65
USFS	240,992	6
National Park Service	2,084	0.1
Tribal Lands	128	0.003
State	465,652	12
Private	600,507	16
Total Carbon and Emery Counties	3,789,257	100

1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

Under FLPMA, BLM has the responsibility to plan for and manage public lands. As defined by the act, public lands are those federally owned lands and any interest in lands (e.g., federally owned mineral estate) that are administered by BLM.

The pre-planning phase of the BLM planning process consists of compiling and reviewing the current laws, regulations, policies, executive orders, and directives pertaining to the management of public lands.

BLM decision-making relevant to land use planning includes the following:

- **Management planning.** BLM's broadest, least specific, level of decision-making specific to land and resource use is in the management plan. RMPs are used by BLM to make land use allocations, provide general future management direction for managing specific areas of land, and provide the framework for management of all natural resources under BLM authority. Plan decisions are based on a public NEPA disclosure process, usually including the development of an EIS.
- **Activity planning.** These plans include more detailed management decisions than RMPs. Mid-level decisions are provided in activity plans, also known as implementation plans. Activity planning addresses management of specific programs. Activity planning usually selects and applies best management practices (BMP) to meet land use plan objectives. Decisions that cover major (e.g., often geographically widespread) proposals lead to coordinated activity plans that cover all programs in an integrated manner. A program-oriented activity plan such as a "habitat

management plan” is another example of an activity plan. Activity plans also must undergo a NEPA analysis.

- **Project decisions.** Individual projects proposed in a specific location are analyzed by BLM for localized or site-specific effects. For example, an oil and gas drilling proposal is evaluated based on the Application for Permit to Drill (APD) process, with a NEPA document presenting impact analysis for the proposed wells. A documented project decision allows the wells to be drilled and completed with site-specific mitigation.

As the broadest, least specific level in the BLM planning process, the RMP will prescribe the allocation of and general future management direction for the resources and land uses of the BLM-administered public lands in the PFO. In turn, the RMP also guides more specific tiers of the planning process (i.e., activity plans and projects or site-specific plans).

The BLM RMP process consists of nine basic steps and requires the use of an interdisciplinary team for the completion of each step. The planning steps described in the regulations (43 CFR 1610.4) and used in preparing this plan are shown in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2. Nine Basic Planning Steps

INFORMATION	
STEP 1: Identification of Issues*	
STEP 2: Development of Planning Criteria*	
STEP 3: Inventory Data and Information Collection	
ANALYSIS	
STEP 4: Analysis of Management Situation	
STEP 5: Formulation of Alternatives	
STEP 6: Estimation of Effects of Alternatives	
STEP 7: Selection of Preferred Alternatives	
DECISION	
STEP 8: Selection of Resources Management Plan*	
IMPLEMENTATION	
STEP 9: Monitoring and Evaluation**	

* Public participation is invited throughout the planning process but is formally requested at these steps.

** The RMP shall be revised as necessary based on monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, and changes in circumstances affecting the entire plan or major portions of the plan.

Five documents must be completed during preparation of the RMP to record the planning process: the Preplanning Analysis, the Management Situation Analysis (MSA), the Draft RMP EIS, the Proposed RMP and Final EIS, and the Record of Decision (ROD) and RMP. A given document serves as a foundation for the subsequent one. The RMP/EIS is the foundation for an implementation decision and the implementation decision in turn is a foundation for the activity or project specific decision.

The Final RMP/EIS indicates a Proposed RMP. Persons who participated in the planning process and have an interest (which is or may be adversely affected by approval of the RMP) may protest the approval. Protests may raise only issues that were submitted for the record during the planning process.

Protests shall be filed within 30 days after the Final RMP EIS is filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

BLM monitors and evaluates the Final RMP, with formal review taking place every 5 years. Public reaction to BLM's land management can lead to revision of the RMP through these periodic reviews. Public concerns voiced through changes in law or agency policy also serve as a basis for planning decisions.

1.5 PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria were established to provide the constraints and ground rules that guide and direct the development of the plan. These criteria further define the need for the proposed plan revision and determine how the planning team develops alternatives and ultimately the selection of a preferred alternative. The planning criteria ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues (see Section 1.6) and that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. The criteria focus on providing an early, tentative basis for inventory and data collection needs. Planning criteria used in this RMP are listed as follows:

- This plan will recognize the existence of valid existing rights.
- Lands covered in the RMP are public lands, which include split estate lands, managed by BLM.
- The plan will use and observe the principles of multiple use and sustained yield set forth in the FLPMA and other applicable laws (43 USC 1701.202(c)(1)).
- Where possible, BLM will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach to jointly determine the desired future condition of public lands.
- BLM will strive to ensure that management prescriptions are consistent with other planning jurisdictions to the extent possible, within the boundaries described by law and policy.
- Management prescriptions will consider a range of alternatives that focus on the relative values of resources and ensure responsiveness to the identified issues that create the need for the proposed plan revision.
- The socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives will be considered.
- BLM will use current scientific information, research, new technologies, and the results of inventory, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies to enhance or restore impaired ecosystems.
- Management of existing Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) will be guided by the Interim Management Policy (IMP) for Lands Under Wilderness Review. Land use allocations made for WSAs must be consistent with the IMP and with other laws, regulations, and policies related to WSA management. The RMP will address how these lands would be managed if released by Congress from WSA status.
- Comprehensive land health standards will apply to all activities and uses. Adjustments to current livestock grazing or wildlife forage allocations will be considered in accordance with *Utah Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines*. The standards and guidelines are applicable to all action alternatives.

- Baseline reasonable foreseeable development (RFD) scenarios will be developed and portrayed based on historical, existing, and projected levels of resource use under each of the alternatives analyzed in detail.
- BLM will coordinate with Native American tribes to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage.
- Paleontological and cultural resources will be evaluated for use allocations, as appropriate, including provisions for interpretation, preservation, conservation, and enhancement.
- The decisions of the selected plan will be implemented in compliance with the Endangered Species Act, as amended. BLM will conduct Section 7 consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on listed plant and animal species as necessary on individual actions taken under this plan. BLM will not authorize any action that will contribute to the need to list any non-listed special status species.
- Areas potentially suitable for an ACEC will be identified and brought forward for analysis in the RMP.
- All rivers will be considered, and determinations of eligibility, suitability, tentative classification, and protective management will be made in accordance with Section 5(d) of the *Wild and Scenic Rivers Act* and *BLM Manual 8351*. Public nominations have been requested.
- Objectives for vegetation management or desired future conditions will be developed.
- Decisions regarding OHV use will be consistent with BLM's National OHV Strategy.
- BLM will continue to consider administrative access on a case-by-case basis.
- This RMP will not address RS-2477 right-of-way assertions. Such assertions will be settled administratively on a case-by-case basis or as confirmed through other legal means.
- Utilize the recreation opportunity spectrum to identify and map essential landscape settings to provide opportunities for the public to obtain desired recreation experiences within Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA).

1.6 IDENTIFICATION OF PLANNING ISSUES

Planning issues are concerns or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations; levels of resource use, production, and protection; and related management practices. They contribute to the need for this proposed plan revision. The RMP process provides an opportunity to address these conflicts or questions. Issues may be of local, state, or national concern, or they may reflect conditions specific to the PFO. Identified issues are subject to change throughout the planning process as new conditions or concerns are identified.

Comments were solicited from the public, organizations, tribal governments, and federal, state, and local agencies to identify issues. Additionally, management concerns were identified through discussions with BLM resource specialists. The issues listed below do not include all resources involved in the planning process but only those issues that were identified by the PFO during the agency and public scoping process.

1.6.1 Air Quality

Current air quality standards postdate many earlier planning decisions. BLM will ensure compliance with all applicable local, state, tribal, and federal air quality laws, statutes, regulations, standards, and implementation plans. The RMP will identify desired future conditions and area-wide criteria or restrictions, in cooperation with the State of Utah and EPA, that apply to direct or authorized emission-generating activities. The RMP also will address protection of Class I air sheds and maintenance of regional haze standards.

1.6.2 Soil, Water, Riparian, and Vegetation

Current management direction is inconsistent or lacking in opportunities to enhance the management of watershed values, vegetation, and riparian resources in the PFO. The State of Utah has developed non-point source BMP, and these are applied on a case-by-case basis. This new planning effort will address on a regional scale the following needs:

- Enhanced management direction for riparian vegetation resources and watershed values
- Maintenance or improvement of soil quality and long-term soil productivity through implementation of rangeland health standards and other soil protection measures.
- Appropriate consideration for water quality concerns related to activities on public lands, including but not limited to the following:
 - Clean Water Act
 - State Water Classifications in the 303-D and 305 Report
 - State Water Inventories
 - EPA-approved TMDL Reports
 - Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act
 - Safe Drinking Water Acts Amendments
 - The Unified Federal Policy for a Watershed Approach and Category One (i.e., ABC) watersheds
 - At-risk water quality due to naturally occurring formations
- Management and control of noxious weeds
- Appropriate conservation or restoration of at-risk watersheds
- Appropriate management of numerous special status vegetation species to prevent state or federal listing of populations
- Appropriate and consistent floodplain protection.

1.6.3 Cultural and Paleontology

There are numerous laws, regulations, and manuals as well as program guidance for the cultural program that postdate many earlier planning decisions:

- New planning will seek to provide a forum for exploring opportunities to use cultural and paleontological resources consistent with their scientific, educational, recreational, and other values within the PFO.
- Many policies and strategies regarding consideration of Native American values, sovereignty, and coordination and consultation were not in place during the preparation of existing plans. Also, acts, laws, and regulations regarding tribal government sovereignty and orientation between governments were not in place earlier. Thus, a combined revision will seek to actively consult with, fully address concerns, and recognize values important to Native Americans in compliance

with these new requirements (i.e., *BLM Manual 8100* and Executive Order 13175, *Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments*, November 6, 2000).

- International public awareness of the significant resources found in the PFO has increased. Many new archaeological and paleontological discoveries, excavations, and analyses have occurred since the earlier planning decisions were written. These new findings are beginning to change BLM's understanding of the resources in the PFO. This RMP will seek to provide a more active and educational forum for the management of these resources including science, education, recreation, and other values.

1.6.4 Visual

Management of scenic values and important landscape features has become a much more important aspect of natural resource management in the PFO. Changes in visitor use patterns and frequency, visitor sensitivity to changes in the landscape, and development are creating challenges for the management and maintenance of scenic quality. The existing visual resource management (VRM) class designations will be reviewed and amended as needed to provide for multiple use and visual experiences throughout the PFO.

1.6.5 Fish and Wildlife

Earlier planning decisions did not clearly identify desired future conditions for wildlife. This RMP will—

- Update the wildlife species and numbers and habitat inventories, which will assist in identifying measurable objectives for important wildlife habitats, including—
 - Define desired future conditions
 - Designate priority species and critical habitats (special status species)
 - Identify opportunities or restrictions needed to achieve desired future conditions
 - Address conservation strategies
- Incorporate sage-grouse management guidelines and plans related to the protection of buffer zones around leks and other appropriate measures as well as general management of the sagebrush ecosystem.
- Integrate the population and habitat goals and objectives of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) Herd Management Plans, where appropriate, and consider reintroduction; transplant; augmentation; or reestablishment of fish, wildlife, and plants per Manual 1745 direction.

1.6.6 Wild Horses and Burros

Four Herd Management Areas (HMA) exist in the planning area (Range Creek, Muddy Creek, Sinbad, and Robber's Roost). This RMP addresses the management of wild horses, including initial and estimated herd sizes, while preserving or maintaining a thriving ecological balance and multiple use relationships. Actions will be to—

- Establish the guidelines and criteria for adjusting appropriate management level (AML)
- Modify HMA boundaries, which were inaccurately described in the earlier planning decisions
- Develop management and population plans for HMAs
- Consider ecological concerns and the balancing of ecological concerns with herd management levels during decision-making.

1.6.7 Fire and Fuels Management

This RMP addresses appropriate fire management actions, including areas where fire is not desired, where fire can be used as a resource management tool for habitat restoration, and where fuel reductions are necessary as required by various Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policies.

1.6.8 Forest and Woodlands

There is a demand for the commercial harvest of forest and woodland species, including Douglas fir, pinyon pine, and juniper trees. Additionally, the Healthy Forest Planning Act passed in 2003 directs additional attention to the management of forests and woodlands on public lands. The PFO needs to address requests to allow commercial harvest of timber and non-timber forest and woodland products and to evaluate the need and opportunity for development, with an emphasis on restoration and rehabilitation. Private or state-owned lands surround many of the areas where BLM forest resources occur. Existing plans do not address management of Christmas tree cutting or vegetation harvest (including pine nuts, native grass, and brush seeds).

1.6.9 Livestock Grazing

Resource concerns and potential conflicts have arisen regarding the allocation and season of use of forage within the PFO. The new BLM grazing regulations do not provide for suspended non-use but recognize animal unit months (AUM) that are active and in a voluntary non-use status. Under policy derived from previous grazing rules, BLM implemented many forage reductions in the PFO by obtaining agreement with the permittees to take long-term voluntary non-use rather than have those AUMs suspended or canceled. Many permittees are now applying for grazing use at levels that correspond to the AUMs that have been in voluntary non-use status. Isolated instances of resource degradation are occurring in site-specific areas, particularly associated with seasons of use and forage allocation. This RMP will ensure resolution of rangeland health concerns by addressing the following:

- Comprehensive land health standards for the resource should be applied to all uses, not just livestock grazing. In addition, standards and guidelines for rangeland health will be addressed in the RMP.
- Evaluate forage allocation for livestock, wildlife, and wild horses and burros that incorporate needs for wildlife habitat and protection of riparian and watershed values.

1.6.10 Recreation

Quality outdoor recreational resources are located within the planning area. Visitor use is exerting an impact on soil, water, vegetation, and wildlife. This RMP will review recreation uses and projected needs to determine appropriate management for the following:

- SRMA requiring enhanced or special management for recreational uses or for protection of recreation-related resource values. These areas include the San Rafael Swell, Desolation Canyon, Labyrinth Canyon, Cleveland-Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry, and Nine Mile Canyon.
- Special recreation permit (SRP) policies will be reviewed for river and upland guided use. Establish limits of use, or limits of acceptable change, that will protect resource values as well as meet the needs of companies holding valid SRPs.
- In developed recreation sites and along some river corridors, there is conflict with recreation and livestock grazing. Grazing in these areas diminishes the quality of the recreation experience due

to loss of vegetation, accumulations of livestock excrement and its associated odor, insect infestation, and increased exposure to fecal-borne pathogens.

- Consider recreation in relation to other resource uses and the changing demand for outdoor recreation opportunities in the Field Office.
- Recreation needs and resource impacts across all lands will be evaluated. Specific management needs will be identified for existing or new Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMA) and SRMA, and SRP policies will be revisited. The RMP will consider whether areas currently have or are likely to have heavy or increasing uses and, if needed, will make use allocations.

1.6.10.1 Off-Highway Vehicle Use

OHV use has become a significant issue within the PFO. OHV use and management will be addressed in conformance with the BLM National OHV Strategy in an effort to resolve resource conflicts that pertain to other natural resources and provide for responsible OHV use.

Existing OHV use categories and route designations will be reviewed and modified where needed to meet changing resource objectives.

Within the limited category, BLM will designate specific roads and trails for OHV use. The 2003 San Rafael Motorized Route Designation Plan is incorporated by reference into this RMP.

1.6.11 Lands and Realty

Community growth and development and changing use of public lands require that many goals and objectives of lands and realty management be revisited. This RMP will ensure that the plan—

- Designate transportation and utility right-of-way corridors (including avoidance areas and exclusion areas)
- Determine specific land use authorization decisions to achieve specific resource goals and objectives
- Identify access needs
- Evaluate proposals for land tenure adjustments in the context of facilitating resource management objectives
- Establish criteria for land tenure adjustments
- Establish management for acquired lands
- Review current withdrawals and recommend new withdrawals as applicable.

1.6.12 Minerals and Energy Development

New projections of RFD will be made and analyzed in the PFO RMP/EIS. Direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of mineral development on wildlife, recreation, soil, water and air quality, and VRM as well as wilderness resources designations will be reanalyzed. Baseline minerals information for earlier planning decisions will be revised to reflect new and developing information. The RMP will ensure that minerals management issues, opportunities, and potential impacts will be addressed at an appropriate regional scale and will consider the following:

- Updated regional RFD scenarios for mineral development to be updated on a regional scale
- The requirements of the EPCA
- Changing resource conditions, technologies, and issues that reflect a need to review and possibly modify oil and gas leasing categories where appropriate
- Changing resource conditions and technologies that reflect a need to review development of coal resources in the PFO
- Mitigation and lease stipulations to ensure consistency throughout the planning area (i.e., surface use stipulations developed for oil and gas apply to all surface-disturbing activities)
- Increased demand for energy as balanced against the need for protection of other resources.

1.6.13 Wilderness Study Areas

Ten WSAs and one Instant Study Area (ISA) are designated and currently managed under the IMP and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review. This RMP will determine how such lands would be managed should Congress release them from wilderness consideration and management under the IMP. The RMP will also set objectives for management of visual resources and OHVs in the WSAs and ISA.

1.6.14 Non-WSA Lands With or Likely to Have Wilderness Characteristics

While BLM will not consider designation of new WSAs in this planning process, it will consider whether non-WSA lands with or likely to have wilderness characteristics will be managed to preserve some or all of those values with other land management allocations and actions. These may include, but are not limited to, designation of OHV categories, mineral leasing categories, VRM classes, SRMAs, recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) classes, and ACECs. Also, because management of these lands continues to be an issue in Utah, it is appropriate that this EIS disclose impacts to wilderness characteristics that would result from the planning alternatives.”

In the area managed by the Price Field Office, there are non-WSA lands that were inventoried by BLM in the *1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory*, and determined to have wilderness characteristics as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, and there are other non-WSA lands where BLM has determined through review of available information that they are likely to have wilderness characteristics.

Two policy memorandums, IM 2003-274, *BLM Implementation of the Settlement of Utah v. Norton Regarding Wilderness Study*, and IM 2003-275 – Change 1, *Consideration of Wilderness Characteristics in Land Use Plans*, guide the consideration of non-WSA wilderness characteristics in land use planning. They provide for BLM to consider information on individual wilderness characteristics in land use planning efforts, and to manage such lands in a way that would protect and/or preserve some or all of those characteristics. This may include protecting certain lands in their natural condition and/or providing opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. IM 2003-275 - Change 1 defines the wilderness characteristics that may be considered in land use planning – refer to “Wilderness Characteristics” in the glossary.

In the development of this RMP, wilderness characteristics are considered in a manner commensurate with other resource information.

1.6.15 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

BLM will review existing designations as well as other lands within the planning area that may meet specific designation criteria and determine appropriate management prescriptions for these areas.

1.6.16 Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Price River MFP did not make wild and scenic river considerations. The San Rafael RMP made eligibility and tentative classification determinations but did not consider suitability. All potentially eligible rivers in both areas are being reviewed through this planning process to determine eligibility, tentative classification, and suitability.

As a cooperating agency involved with the development of the Price Draft RMP/EIS, the State of Utah has proposed that a statewide wild and scenic river review be completed. In accordance with Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, BLM will continue to make wild and scenic river considerations through the land use planning process. Additionally, BLM would consider further statewide review at a later date.

1.6.17 Hazardous Materials and Waste

Where appropriate, this RMP will address hazardous materials issues. The PFO RMP will keep public lands free from unauthorized hazardous material generations, storage, or transport. RMP prescriptions will be in compliance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

1.7 RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PROGRAMS, PLANS, AND POLICIES

State and BLM/PFO must coordinate planning for the PFO resource area with the land use planning and management programs of other federal departments, the State of Utah, local governments in the planning area, and Indian tribes; and BLM/PFO will develop a land use plan herein that shall be consistent with State and Local plans to the maximum extent the Secretary finds consistent with Federal law and the purposes of FLPMA (See FLPMA Section 202(c)(9) and 43 CFR 1610.3-2 [a]).

Plans that affect lands within the PFO will be reviewed for decisions, issues, and management prescriptions that need to be carried forward or considered for consistency with the new RMP. These plans are shown in Table 1-3.

Table 1-3. Other Management Plans

County Land Use Plans	Carbon County, Utah Emery County, Utah
State of Utah	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Huntington Lake State Park Resource Management Plan Goblin Valley State Park Resource Management Plan Millsite State Park Resource Management Mineral Leasing Plan for Sovereign Lands on the Green and Colorado Rivers
Other Federal Plans	Manti-LaSal National Forest Land Use Plan Uintah and Ouray Indian Tribe Land Use Plan
Mining Activity Plans	Oil and Gas EA, 1988 Designation of Hydrocarbon Lease Categories, 1984

Recreation Management Plans	Cleveland–Lloyd Management Plan, 1976 Recreation and Cultural Management Plan for Nine Mile Canyon Management Plan, 1994 Desolation and Grey Canyon River Management Plan, 1979
Habitat Plans	North San Rafael HMP, 1997 San Rafael Desert HMP, 1992 Range Valley Mountain HMP EA Grassy Trail HMP, 1987
Herd Management Area Plans	Range Creek HMAP, 1993 Sinbad HMAP, 1993
Endangered Species Recovery Plans	Razorback Sucker Recovery Plan, 1999 Maguire Daisy Recovery Plan, 1995 Mexican Spotted Owl Recovery Plan, 1995 Utah Reed-Mustards Recovery Plan, 1994 Last Chance Townsendia Recovery Plan, 1993 Colorado Squawfish Recovery Plan, 1991 Bonytail Chub Recovery Plan, 1990 Humpback Chub Recovery Plan, 1990 Unita Basin Hookless Cactus, 1990 Northern States Bald Eagle Recovery Plan, 1983 Black Footed Ferret Recovery Plan, 1988 The Recovery Implementation Plan for the Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin, 1987 Wright Fishhook Cactus Recovery Plan, 1985 American Peregrine Falcon Recovery Plan, 1984
Water Quality	Utah Water Quality Plan, Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Plan

The President's comprehensive National Energy Policy, issued in May 2001, directed the Secretary to "...examine land status and lease stipulation impediments to federal oil and gas leasing, and review and modify those where opportunities exist (consistent with the law, good environmental practice and balanced use of other resources)." Under this directive the Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals Management delivered to Congress an inventory of U.S. oil and gas resources in five western basins, as well as the extent and nature of any restrictions or impediments to their development. This report was prepared at the request of Congress under the provisions of the EPCA.

1.8 AGENCY ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

BLM is the lead agency for this EIS process. The lead agency takes primary responsibility for preparing the EIS and requesting the participation of each cooperating agency. Section 202(c)(9) of FLPMA, as paraphrased, requires BLM to (1) provide for meaningful public involvement of State and local government officials, both elected and appointed, in the planning process, (2) coordinate planning with the land use planning and management programs of other federal agencies, state and local government officials and Indian tribes, (3) provide for in developing land use decisions for public lands including early public notice of proposed decisions that may have a significant effect on all public lands administered by BLM in the planning area as well as lands other than BLM administered federal lands, (4) collaborate with State and local governments in the land use planning process at the earliest possible time as is practicable and continues throughout the process, (5) assure that BLM consideration is given to state, local and tribal plans germane to the RMP planning process and to the use of environmental analysis and proposals of cooperating agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise, and (6) assure that the Price RMP is consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent the Secretary finds consistent with Federal law and the purposes of FLPMA, consistent with its responsibility. Any designated federal, state, or local, agency that becomes a cooperator is required to sign a memorandum of understanding identifying specific roles and responsibilities, provided such memorandum of understanding shall not conflict with FLPMA Section 1712(c)(9).

The primary role of the cooperating agencies is to coordinate and collaborate with BLM in developing from the earliest stages through to the final EIS, the Price BLM RMP, ensuring along the way that the Price BLM RMP is coordinated with State and local plans, and that the Price BLM RMP is consistent with such State and local plans to the maximum extent the Secretary finds consistent with Federal law and the purposes of FLPMA. In this context, officials in each county are authorized to furnish advice to BLM PFO and BLM State Office with respect to developing and revising the RMP providing input to the BLM where they have special expertise and jurisdiction. Carrying out these functions includes, but is not limited to that area alone. They also serve as reviewers of draft information and giving overall input on the EIS process. Cooperating agencies are expected to participate in the EIS process at the earliest possible time, including participation in the scoping process

The following agencies with jurisdiction, special expertise, or interest in the PFO RMP development process have agreed to participate in the EIS process as cooperating agencies:

- USFWS
- State of Utah
- Carbon County
- Emery County

1.9 HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This section describes ways to locate information and provides an overview of the EIS process.

1.9.1 Document Organization

This Draft EIS contains the following major chapter headings and information.

Table of Contents—Provides page numbers for subjects.

Chapter 1, Purpose and Need—Introduces the Draft EIS; the purpose and need to which BLM is responding; an overview of the BLM planning process; statutes (laws), limitations, and guidelines BLM must adhere to in preparing an RMP; it describes the relationship of this Draft EIS with other plans.

Chapter 2, Alternatives—Describes how the alternatives were developed, management guidance common to all alternatives, and alternatives considered but eliminated from further consideration. It also presents specific management actions proposed under the alternatives and a comparative summary of the impacts of each alternative. The Common to All Alternatives category includes management actions that may be rule, regulation, law, policy, or BMP that BLM will implement regardless of the alternative selected. The No Action Alternative category reflects current management. Four RMP alternatives (A, B, C, and D) to the current management practices are presented. These alternatives present a reasonable range based on new information, guidance, policy, or scientific knowledge. Alternative D is identified as BLM's preferred alternative. Management actions are presented by the following categories under each alternative:

Section 2.2, Resources—These resources include air quality; soil, water, and riparian; vegetation; cultural; paleontology; visual; special status species; fish and wildlife; wild horses and burros; and fire and fuels management.

Section 2.3, Resource uses—These uses include forest and woodlands; livestock grazing; recreation; lands and realty; and minerals and energy development.

Section 2.4, Special designations—These designations include WSAs, ACECs, and wild and scenic rivers.

Section 2.5, Support—These services include transportation and motorized access and hazardous materials and waste.

Chapter 3, Affected Environment—Describes the PFO and the existing environmental conditions that would be affected by the alternatives. This chapter is organized by resources, resource uses, special designations, and support as described for Chapter 2. Socioeconomic conditions are described last.

Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences—Forms the scientific and analytic basis for the comparison of environmental impacts of each alternative, including the No Action Alternative, as described in Chapter 2. Under each alternative, analysis is organized by resource (as described for Chapter 2) and socioeconomic conditions. Impacts generally are described in terms of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts.

Chapter 5, Consultation and Coordination—Describes the EIS scoping process and other past and planned agency consultation and public involvement activities. A list of agencies, organizations, and individuals receiving this Draft EIS is also presented.

Chapter 6, List of Preparers and Reviewers—Presents the names and qualifications of the persons responsible for preparing this Draft EIS.

Chapter 7, Glossary, Acronyms, and Abbreviations—Provides an alphabetized list of definitions for terms used in this Draft EIS and defines acronyms and abbreviations.

Chapter 8, References—Provides full citation information for all references cited within the document. Most cited documents are reasonably available from other public sources such as libraries. Many of the cited documents are available for public review at the BLM PFO.

Chapter 9, Index—Provides an alphabetized list of subjects addressed in this Draft EIS and the pages on which they are located. (IN PROGRESS AND NOT INCLUDED IN THIS DRAFT)

Appendices—Includes documents that support existing resource conditions or situations, substantiate analysis, provide resource management guidance, explain processes, or provide other information directly relevant to the EIS.

1.9.2 Guide to the EIS Process

The process for preparing an EIS is determined by the federal regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508). The major steps in the EIS process are described as follows:

Notice of Intent (NOI)—BLM published an NOI in the *Federal Register* in November 2001 to announce its intention to revise the Price River and San Rafael land use plans.

Scoping Period—BLM provided extensive public involvement opportunities during the scoping process. Scoping meetings were held in Salt Lake, Green River, Price, Castle Dale, and Moab, Utah, and in Grand Junction, Colorado. The scoping period, its results, and additional agency and public participation are described in Chapter 5, Consultation and Coordination.

Draft EIS—This document is the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS considers public and agency comments received during the scoping process, provides a description of the alternatives, describes the environment that would be affected, and assesses the potential impacts.

Comment Period and Public Hearings—The public and agencies may review and comment on the Draft EIS during a 90-day comment period. BLM will hold public open houses for informational purposes and to receive comments from the public.

Final EIS—The purpose of the Final EIS is for BLM to assess, consider, and respond to comments received on the Draft EIS. A 30-day protest period follows the release of the Proposed RMP Final EIS along with a 60-day governor's consistency review.

ROD—The ROD is a separate and concise public ROD that clearly identifies and describes the Final RMP. It links BLM's decision to the analysis presented in the EIS. The ROD shows how environmental impacts and other factors were considered in the decision-making process. It identifies the environmentally preferred alternative and explains all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental harm that have been adopted and, if not, why they were not.

1.10 COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

BLM holds as a priority, collaborative management. This includes what Interior Secretary Gale Norton refers to as "The Four Cs": consultation, cooperation, and communication—all in the service of conservation. The Four Cs are the basis for this Administration's new environmentalism, one that looks to those closest to the land—rather than Washington, DC for answers to public land issues."

BLM recognizes that social, economic, and environmental issues cross-land ownership lines and that extensive cooperation at the planning stage and beyond is needed to actively address issues of mutual concern. It also recognizes that resource and land use demands will likely exceed BLM's ability to effectively respond to all issues currently before the agency in Carbon and Emery counties and that will arise in the future. Consequently, upon RMP approval, BLM would seek to do the following:

- Form innovative partnerships with local and state governments, tribal governments, qualified organizations, and adjacent federal agencies to manage lands or programs for mutual benefit consistent with the goals and objectives of this RMP
- Work with communities, state agencies, and interested organizations in seeking non-traditional sources of funding, including challenge cost-share programs, grants, and contributions-in-kind to support specific projects needed to achieve plan objectives
- Place greater emphasis, where appropriate, on contracting with the private sector, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and local and state agencies to accomplish essential studies, monitoring, and project developments
- Increase the use of citizen and organizational volunteers to provide greater monitoring of resource conditions under site-steward programs and to complete on-the-ground developments for resource management and human use and enjoyment.

Moreover, where it is found mutually advantageous, BLM would enter into cooperative agreements or memorandums of understanding with federal, state, local, tribal, and private entities to manage lands or programs consistent with the goals and objectives of this RMP. Such agreements could provide for the sharing of human or material resources, the management of specific tracts of lands for specific purposes, and the adjustment of management responsibilities on prescribed lands to eliminate redundancy and

reduce costs. BLM also would encourage the participation of land trusts and similar organizations in facilitating land exchanges or acquisitions that achieve planning objectives. Non-profit associations, citizens, and user groups that have adequate resources and expertise could enter into cooperative agreements to assist in the management of public lands in Carbon and Emery counties, including, but not limited to, resource monitoring, site cleanups, and the construction of interpretive facilities, trails, or other authorized projects.

1.11 PLAN MONITORING, MAINTENANCE, AMENDMENT, REVISION, AND IMPLEMENTATION

BLM expects that new information gathered from field inventories, other agency studies, resource themes from shared interagency databanks, and other sources will change baseline data used to arrive at proposed land use decisions and resource allocations. To the extent such new information and actions bear on issues covered in the plan, BLM will integrate the data through a process called plan maintenance or updating. Decisions would be made with the appropriate level of NEPA analysis along with any procedural and regulatory requirements for individual programs (40 CFR 1500-1508, BLM NEPA Handbook H-170-1, and 526 DM 1-7).

When BLM considers taking or approving actions that would not conform to the goals, objectives, or terms and conditions of this plan, BLM would prepare a proposed plan amendment and environmental analysis to determine whether a plan amendment may be warranted. The RMP will be dynamic over the course of its life to respond to the numerous changes that inevitably will affect public lands in Carbon and Emery counties. Amendments will be considered a normal and anticipated part of the planning process. Where changes are of a significant magnitude and affect a variety of resource programs, a full or partial plan revision will be considered and will be subject to further NEPA analysis. BLM will review the RMP periodically after the ROD is approved to determine whether the plan remains effective in guiding BLM's management of lands and resources.

In implementing the plan, BLM will focus its resources on the highest priority issues determined to have the greatest significance to the health of the public lands involved and the socioeconomic well-being of local communities. Other issues will be deferred until priority programs and projects are implemented and found to be effective in accomplishing their intended purpose. Factors that would be used in setting priorities include the following:

- Legal and administrative mandates
- The extent to which critical resources or opportunities may be lost if action is not quickly taken
- Availability of committed partners willing to share in costs and administration
- Consistency with priority plans and programs of local, state, and other federal agencies
- Geographic areas that BLM determines would receive the greatest return for the time and resources applied.

For many actions proposed in this RMP, BLM will prepare or collaborate in preparation of detailed, site-specific activity level plans that define projects and examine site-specific impacts to affected resources. These plans will address specific resource issues in prescribed geographic areas and will be completed with appropriate public and agency participation and environmental analysis. Planning at this level will allow BLM to focus on particular land management opportunities or problems needing resolution in a manner not possible in the broad overview provided in this RMP. To the extent practical, these plans will be integrated with the plans of other interested or affected agencies.